

**VOLUNTEER TOURISM IMPACTS TOWARDS HOST  
COMMUNITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY  
A CASE STUDY OF BATU PUTEH COMMUNITY TOURISM  
COOPERATIVE LTD (KOPEL BHD), KINABATANGAN, SABAH**

**JANNAHTUL ‘IZZATI BINTI RAHMAN**

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA**

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of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Science (Tourism Planning)

Faculty of Built Environment  
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To the King and Queen of my heart, beloved Abah and Mama,  
Brothers and sisters (Abang Syidi, Kak Cuya, Kak Ju, Abang Aril and Ami),  
and My Mighty Knight.

Thank you for the great and never ending love, continuous supports, tolerance,  
encouragements and confidence in me. Your endless supports and tonnes  
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## ABSTRACT

Volunteer tourism impacts refer to the potential positive and negative impacts generated by volunteer tourist during and after volunteering in a specific host destination. As previous research merely focusing on the impacts gained by volunteer tourist and less research is done with respect to host destination perspective, this research is aimed to address the benefits gained by the host community in the context of developing country. In order to discover and understand what exactly gained by host community, this research is done by applying a case study research approach along with in-depth interview with the local representatives in one of the best volunteer tourism host destination in Kinabatangan, Sabah. Researcher has lined out several important inquiries of the research such as what are exactly gained by the host community through volunteer tourism? How much does the host community benefits from the volunteer activities? Were volunteer tourism activities creates more tangible or intangible benefits to the locals? And which of the benefits is preferred and valued more by the locals? The data collected have been analysed into three main themes which are social/ livelihood benefits, economic benefits and environmental benefits. The results of this study illustrate impacts experienced and valued by local community varied based on their acceptance of volunteer tourist, years of involvement in volunteer tourism and relationship or bonding generated with volunteer tourist. Based on the key findings, this study concludes that host community valued volunteer tourists most on the social/livelihood benefits generated by them compared to financial benefits as usually expected in other researches. Whilst, the potential negative impacts of volunteer tourism such as dependency as proven in less developed countries did not occurred in the study area due to KOPEL's proper planning and set up as tourism cooperative or as a community based tourism.

## ABSTRAK

Impak pelancongan sukarela (*volunteer tourism*) yang dikaji di dalam kajian ini ialah merujuk kepada impak positif dan negatif yang dihasilkan oleh pelancong sukarela semasa dan selepas menjalani aktiviti sukarela di destinasi pelancongan sukarela tertentu. Kebanyakan penyelidikan terdahulu hanya memberi tumpuan kepada impak yang diperolehi oleh pelancong sukarela dan kajian yang melihat impak yang dijana dari perspektif penduduk setempat (*host community*) adalah sangat sedikit. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam faedah yang diperolehi oleh penduduk setempat dalam konteks negara membangun. Bagi mengetahui dan memahami apa sebenarnya yang diperolehi oleh penduduk setempat, kajian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes dan teknik temubual terperinci (*in-depth interview*) dengan wakil-wakil masyarakat tempatan di salah satu daripada destinasi pelancongan sukarela yang diiktiraf antara terbaik di Malaysia iaitu di Kinabatangan, Sabah. Beberapa persoalan utama telah digariskan di dalam kajian ini antaranya apakah sebenarnya yang diperolehi oleh masyarakat tuan rumah melalui pelancongan sukarela? Berapa banyakkah manfaat yang diterima oleh masyarakat setempat dari aktiviti sukarela? Adakah aktiviti pelancongan sukarela mewujudkan lebih banyak impak yang boleh diukur atau sebaliknya? Dan apakah faedah yang lebih penting dan lebih dihargai oleh penduduk tempatan? Data yang dikumpul telah dianalisa kepada tiga tema utama iaitu faedah sosial, faedah ekonomi dan faedah alam sekitar. Hasil analisa menunjukkan impak dan faedah yang berbeza diterima oleh penduduk setempat berdasarkan tahap penerimaan terhadap pelancong sukarela, tempoh penglibatan dalam pelancongan sukarela dan hubungan yang terjalin antara mereka dan pelancong sukarela. Berdasarkan semua penemuan utama kajian, dapat disimpulkan bahawa penduduk tempatan lebih menghargai pelancong sukarela kerana faedah sosial yang dijana oleh mereka berbanding dengan manfaat kewangan seperti yang biasanya dijangka dan dibuktikan dalam kajian-kajian lain. Sementara itu, kesan-kesan negatif pelancongan sukarela seperti kebergantungan penduduk setempat kepada pelancong sukarela yang berlaku di negara-negara yang kurang maju, tidak berlaku di kawasan kajian kerana KOPEL ditubuhkan melalui perancangan yang teliti dan matlamat yang jelas sebagai pelancongan koperasi atau sebagai pelancongan berasaskan komuniti.